

CAMBYSES AND THE EGYPTIAN CHAOSBESCHREIBUNG TRADITION

This paper concerns Herodotus' account of Cambyses' conquest of Egypt. Its primary focus will be on the problem of how and what Herodotus could have learned about this crucial period from Egyptian sources. Its central contention will be that a recognizable story-pattern emerges from Herodotus' *History* which suggests strongly that he was familiar, perhaps only indirectly, with an enduring and popular Egyptian narrative mode or 'discourse', *Chaosbeschreibung*, that articulates ideas concerning foreign domination of Egypt and the eventual return of native rule, as well as an important Egyptian narrative form, the *Königsnovelle*, the two together forming what has been called the 'prophetic *Königsnovelle*'. Through the manipulation of this 'discourse', the Egyptians sought to preserve the 'integrity' of their civilization 'as a coherent system of meaning'.¹ The extant texts we have that betray this narrative orientation all date to the Graeco-Roman period. What is more, it has for some time been claimed that Herodotus scarcely knew, let alone made use of, the traditional forms of Egyptian historical writing, in particular the *Königsnovelle*. Hence, if the argument made here is correct, we have strong evidence that a close antecedent of the prophetic *Königsnovelle* was already to be found in the time of Herodotus, and furthermore, that he made use of it. An appendix considers the implication for the *History* as a whole of Herodotus' use of the Egyptian sources for the Cambyses-logos.

Herodotus begins Book 3 by resuming the narratives of both Books 1 and 2: with the phrase 'against this Amasis Cambyses the son of Cyrus launched his campaign', we look back to the final chapters of Book 2; but in a larger sense, we are also being asked to look back to Book 1 and the end of the rule of Cyrus. The language Herodotus uses to signal the reason for Cambyses' invasion of Egypt recalls the famous words of his proem: he attacked Amasis for the following reason—*δι' αἰτίην τοιήνδε* (3.1.1),² reminiscent of the phrase *δι' ἣν αἰτίην*, 'for which reason' did the Greeks and barbarians come into conflict (1.1.1). Like the initial review of Phoenician and Persian *logoi* at the beginning of Book 1, the reasons Herodotus gives for Cambyses' invasion of Egypt seem all so very personal, the stuff precisely of a personal grudge (another meaning for *αἰτίην*) that will account for an international conflict of enormous proportions:³ in each case—that is the origin of East–West conflict and the Persian invasion of Egypt—the transfer of women is central.⁴ An Egyptian doctor living at the Persian court suggests to Cambyses that he should

¹ J. Assmann, *The Mind of Egypt. History and Meaning in the Time of the Pharaohs* (New York, 2002; trans. from German edn of 1996), 411.

² All subsequent references will be to Herodotus, unless otherwise noted.

³ Cf. D. Asheri, *Erodoto Le Storie* 3 (Milan, 1990), 213 ad loc. Also J. A. S. Evans, *Herodotus. Explorer of the Past* (Princeton, 1991), 29–30, on the ambiguity of *αἰτίην* here and elsewhere.

⁴ M. L. Lang, 'War and the rape-motif, or why did Cambyses invade Egypt?', *PAPhS* 116 (1972), 410–14, connects the various stories concerning Nitetis to other accounts of warfare started because of the transfer/abduction of women, and concludes that what we have at the beginning of Hdt. 3 are reworked folk-tales. Cf. H. Fahr, *Herodot und Altes Testament* (Frankfurt, 1985), 75–92, who finds in the Cambyses-logos narrative patterning that also shows up elsewhere in Herodotus' *History*, in particular the story of Croesus.

ask for Amasis' daughter in marriage, knowing that this will force the pharaoh either to agree and so lose his child, or refuse and set him at odds with Cambyses. The physician does this because he wants revenge for being displaced. He is not the only doctor in Book 3 whose personal motives will have profound consequences; there is also Democedes of Croton.⁵ Of course, Cambyses follows the doctor's advice. In order to avoid either sending his own daughter, or offending Cambyses by refusing, Amasis sends the daughter of the previous Pharaoh Apries, a woman named Nitetis, but under the guise that she is his own offspring. Cambyses learns the truth from the woman herself, and thus the origin of his anger and his decision to invade Egypt. This, Herodotus announces, is the reason the Persians give for Cambyses' invasion of Egypt.⁶ But he is not done. Herodotus adds that the Egyptians provide another account: they claim that in fact Cambyses was the son of Nitetis, and that it was Cyrus who had asked Amasis for an Egyptian consort. As Herodotus explains, the Egyptians thereby make Cambyses their own: *Αἰγύπτιοι δὲ οἰκηεῖνται* (3.2.1).⁷

Herodotus is quick to dismiss this explanation on the grounds that the Egyptians know full well that bastard-sons cannot inherit the throne of the Achaemenids, but that they tell the story 'pretending to be connected to the house of Cyrus':

λέγοντες δὲ ταῦτα οὐκ ὀρθῶς λέγουσι. οὐ μὲν οὐδὲ λέληθε αὐτοὺς (εἰ γάρ τινες καὶ ἄλλοι τὰ Περσέων νόμιμα ἐπιστέεται καὶ Αἰγύπτιοι) ὅτι πρῶτα μὲν νόθον οὐ σφί νόμος ἐστὶ βασιλεύσαι γνησίου παρέοντος, αὐτὶς δὲ ὅτι Κασσανδάνης τῆς φαρνάσπεω θυγατρὸς ἦν παῖς Καμβύσης, ἀνδρὸς Ἀχαιμενίδεω, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐκ τῆς Αἰγυπτίης. ἀλλὰ παρατρέπουσι τὸν λόγον προσποιούμενοι τῇ Κύρου οἰκίῃ συγγενέες εἶναι. (3.2.2)

The crucial remark here is the one that appears in parenthesis in Hude's OCT: 'for if anyone else then especially the Egyptians know Persian *nomima*'.⁸ Herodotus says this in order to leave no doubt that the Egyptians knew they were misrepresenting the truth when they claimed Cambyses as one of their own. He implies that, save the Persians themselves, none know Persian customs better than the Egyptians. To be sure, Herodotus is overstating things here out of a desire to emphasize that the Egyptian claim to connection with the house of Cyrus was outrageous, inasmuch as they knew it was impossible.⁹ But even if we accept that Herodotus' words are rhetorically driven, we are left to wonder why Egyptians know Persian *nomoi* so much

⁵ R. Thomas, *Herodotus in Context* (Cambridge, 2000), 29–30. See also A. Griffiths, 'Democedes of Croton: a Greek doctor at the court of Darius', *AchHist* 2 (1987), 37–51.

⁶ Cf. Athen. 13.560d–f = Ctesias (*FGrHist* 688), F 13a, Dinon (690), F 11, and Lyceas of Naucratis (613), F 1. Ctesias repeats Herodotus' account, while Dinon and Lyceas claim that Cambyses was the child of Cyrus and Nitetis, herself a daughter of Amasis; see below. Cf. C. Pelling, 'Fun with fragments. Athenaeus and the historians', in D. Braund and J. Wilkins (edd.), *Athenaeus and His World* (Exeter, 2000), 187; also R. B. Stevenson, 'Lies and invention in Deinon's *Persica*', *AchHist* 2 (1987), 27–35.

⁷ It will become clear in the course of this paper that I do not support D. Fehling's line of interpretation: that Cambyses' alleged Egyptian background is inserted into the narrative only to 'safeguard Herodotus' own credit' by showing him to be critical of his 'sources'; see D. Fehling, *Herodotus and His 'Sources'* = *ARCA* 21 (Leeds, 1989; trans. from German edn of 1971, with some additions), 122–3.

⁸ On corresponsive καὶ...καὶ here together with a conditional clause, see J. Denniston, *Greek Particles* (Oxford, 1954²), 325.

⁹ Thomas (n. 5), 229, I think misunderstands the passage: 'The Egyptians on the other hand are wrong about the lineage of Cambyses [citing 3.2.2] for they have insufficient knowledge of Persians customs (*nomima*).' Herodotus makes the point that the Egyptians could not pretend ignorance regarding Cambyses' claim to the Persian throne *precisely because* of their expert knowledge (note the force of οὐ μὲν οὐδὲ λέληθε αὐτοὺς, a favourite Herodotean locution: Denniston [n. 8], 363).

better than Persia's other subjects. It is tempting to speculate that Herodotus knew at first hand the various ways in which the Egyptians accommodated Persian rule, especially the priestly élite; indeed, that he knew how sophisticated and learned the Egyptian response to Persian rule could be. But however we answer this question, the notion is prominently raised in the text that in the relationship of ruler and ruled knowledge of the other's customs is important, a theme to which Herodotus will return. The Egyptians evidently possess this knowledge, and we will see later that Cambyses spectacularly does not.

Herodotus adds two more unattributed explanations for the Persian invasion of Egypt: that Cambyses' real, Persian mother was jealous of the courtesan Nitetis, and Cambyses vowed to take revenge for her when he grew up;¹⁰ and finally, that a Greek mercenary in the service of Amasis defected to Cambyses and provided him with valuable intelligence that encouraged the Persian king in his plan to invade.

Several problems beset the start of Book 3. A major difficulty with Herodotus' reported explanations for Cambyses' decision to attack Egypt is that there is no reference to the cause cited often by scholars, and implied by Herodotus himself earlier in his account: King Croesus of Lydia had made a pact with the Egyptians (1.77.2), and, just as Cyrus had moved against other allies of his vanquished enemy, so too the treaty with Egypt offered all the reason Cambyses needed to invade.¹¹ More importantly, it is hard to accept Herodotus' explanation for the Egyptian claim that Cambyses was half-Egyptian. I do not believe that the Egyptians had any interest in connecting themselves to Cyrus: he was not an important figure to them, as, of course, he was to the Babylonians (as we can see from the Cyrus Cylinder and the Nabonidus Chronicle) and the Jews (as we can see in the Old Testament books of 2 Chron., Ezra, and Isaiah). In both these cases, we see a stress on Cyrus as a legitimate ruler, indeed, as an agent of the divine.¹² Finally, the Egyptian claim that Cambyses was a native son is also problematic inasmuch as it does not sit well with the rest of Herodotus' account of his reign. Herodotus clearly thinks the claim was an attempt to refashion the conquest into something that reflected positively on Egypt, and yet the remainder of his story of Cambyses in Egypt presents a very negative picture of the Persian king.

It seems that there are two possible explanations for this odd situation. First, that Herodotus knew of two Egyptian traditions regarding Cambyses, one positive, which he notices here at the beginning of Book 3, and one negative, which he follows for much of the rest of his account. Or, alternatively, that the apparent inconsistency in *Tendenz* can be accounted for by the fact that Herodotus' source was indeed uniformly negative on the subject of Cambyses, but had elements in it that could be understood (or perhaps better, 'misunderstood') as positive.¹³ There are

¹⁰ See Dinon and Lyceas (n. 6).

¹¹ See, e.g., W. W. How and J. Wells, *A Commentary on Herodotus* 1 (Oxford, 1912), 256 ad 3.1.1. Cf. M. F. Gyles, *Pharaonic Policies and Administration, 663 to 323 B.C.*, James Sprunt Studies in History and Political Science 41 (Chapel Hill, 1959), 38–39.

¹² Cf. T. C. Mitchell, 'The Babylonian exile and the restoration of the Jews in Palestine (586–c.500 B.C.)', *CAH* 3.2 (Cambridge, 1991²), 426–27. For the Babylonian texts in question, see Pritchard, *ANET*³ 315–16, and A. K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (Locust Valley, 1975), 104–11.

¹³ A. B. Lloyd, 'Herodotus on Cambyses. Some thoughts on recent work', *AchHist* 3 (1988), 55–66, esp. 56 and 62, is fundamental on the different strata in Herodotus' account of Cambyses in Egypt. This essay forms the starting point for the present discussion.

major attractions to both views, but also attendant improbabilities.¹⁴ I would like to explore both possibilities further, beginning with the second scenario first.

It is necessary at this point to make clear the particular form of the Egyptian stories about Cambyses that may lie behind Herodotus' account. In 1938 Hermann identified the so-called *Königsnovelle* as an important form in Egyptian literature dating back to the Middle Kingdom: a story built around a legendary king who struggles to preserve Egypt and native rule against external enemies, often assimilated to 'Easterners' or the Hyksos. In particular, the decisions of the king are central and constitute the basis of the characterization of him as a leader—either as successful or unsuccessful.¹⁵ A related narrative orientation, based on apocalyptic literature dating back at least to the Middle Kingdom period and the Prophecy of Neferti, is *Chaosbeschreibung*—not a genre in its own right, but a mode of presentation, or, as it has been usefully called recently, a 'discourse', one that focuses on the hardships that befall Egypt when native rule is lost, and which also has a 'messianic' component that envisions the restoration of Egypt. Several texts have survived, often only in fragments, from the Graeco-Roman period that combine the discourse of *Chaosbeschreibung* with the traditional elements of the *Königsnovelle* to form what Koenen has called the 'Prophetic *Königsnovelle*': the Demotic Prophecy of the Lamb, the Greek Oracle of the Potter, the Dream of Nectanebo (in both Greek and Demotic) and Manetho's Amenophis narrative.¹⁶ The 'Prophetic *Königsnovelle*' can be outlined as follows:

- (i) A first king from time immemorial receives a prophecy from a seer or other prophetic figure (in one case, evident from above, a talking lamb); his decisions and actions regularly lead to the writing down of the prophecy, which in turn guarantees authentication for the entire document.
- (ii) The prophecy itself foretells of coming woe for Egypt. A future king will receive warning of impending invasion; he will hold council, and will go out to do battle on the Eastern borders of the Delta, but will either flee before fighting, or engage in some other activity in lieu of combat, and retreat into a remote area (the marshes of the Delta or Upper Egypt); the invader will then descend upon Egypt, humiliate the priests, open the temples, and slaughter sacred animals.

¹⁴ Cf. T. S. Brown, 'Herodotus' portrait of Cambyses', *Historia* 31 (1982), 393, and esp. Lloyd (n. 13), 56–7.

¹⁵ A. Hermann, *Die ägyptische Königsnovelle*, Leipziger Ägyptologische Studien 10 (Glückstadt, Hamburg, New York, 1938); see also J. Osing, s.v. 'Königsnovelle,' *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 3, 556–7: it is difficult to know exactly what English term to use to characterize the literary type in question, though 'form' or 'standard arrangement' seems best (cf. Osing's 'Ausgestaltung').

¹⁶ On the 'prophetic *Königsnovelle*', see esp. L. Koenen, 'Die Apologie des Töpfers an König Amenophis oder das Töpferorakel', in A. Blasius and B.U. Schipper (edd.), *Apokalyptik und Ägypten* (Leuven, Paris, and Sterling, 2002), 173, and cf. id., 'The dream of Nektanebos', *BASP* 22 (1985), 188–94, and J. Dillery, 'The first Egyptian narrative history: Manetho and Greek historiography', *ZPE* 127 (1999), 102. Though some have recently questioned whether the Dream of Nectanebo and the Prophecy of the Lamb can in fact be called *Königsnovellen*, these criticisms do not account for the 'prophetic' element identified by Koenen that changes the traditional structure of the *Königsnovelle*. For *Chaosbeschreibung* and the *Königsnovelle*, see also D. Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt* (Princeton, 1998), 158 and 241–48, building on earlier scholarship. 'Discourse' is Frankfurter's term for *Chaosbeschreibung*; 'messianic' is Assmann's formulation (n.1), esp. 384–5; and cf. J. G. Manning, *Land and Power in Ptolemaic Egypt* (Cambridge, 2003), 228: the Oracle of the Potter an example of 'messianic literature'.

- (iii) After a period of time fixed by the prophecy the same future pharaoh will return, or perhaps his descendent acting in his place, and will expel the invader and restore order to Egypt.

Underpinning this story, and often providing it with crucial terms and images, is the central myth and ritual of Egyptian religion: the conflict of Osiris and Seth, the murder and mutilation of Osiris, and the reconstitution of Osiris by Isis. Assmann has called the transformation of this 're-membering' of Osiris 'perhaps the most impressive Egyptian response to the experience of foreign rule', and he observes that we do not have evidence for the reworking of the story into a nationalist response predating the Ptolemaic period.¹⁷ Many, including Assmann, have long felt that this process of converting Egyptian myth into expressions of patriotic sentiment during periods of foreign domination must have begun during the Persian period, even though our best manifestations of it come from later eras.¹⁸ I should hasten to add that the 'nationalism' evident in these texts had its origins in, and was probably largely confined to, the priestly élite in Egypt,¹⁹ precisely the people Herodotus had contact with. If the central claim of this paper is correct—that the Cambyses *logos* of Herodotus is in fact built out of Egyptian stories constructed in the tradition of *Chaosbeschreibung*—then we would have confirmation for this view.

A major obstacle in the way of connecting Herodotus' Cambyses-*logos* with the tradition of *Chaosbeschreibung*, and the prophetic *Königsnovelle* in particular, is that some have argued that Herodotus did not appreciate or even understand the essential Egyptian historiographic forms that predated him, namely the king-list and the *Königsnovelle*.²⁰ But I believe that there is in fact good evidence that Herodotus encountered at least one other case of a 'prophetic king's story' in addition to the account of Cambyses: the narrative of Anysis, Sabacos and Sethos (2.137–42).²¹ We are told that Anysis, the first pharaoh after the last pyramid builder, was blind. During his reign Egypt was invaded by Ethiopians under Sabacos. Anysis fled to the marsh-country to an island called Elbo, while Sabacos ruled Egypt for fifty years. In the fiftieth year, Sabacos had a dream that a man stood by his bed and told him to gather all the priests of Egypt and cut them in half. Wisely understanding this to be a divine provocation, Sabacos refused to do what he was told by the dream and left for Ethiopia. As it turns out, fifty years before he had received another prophecy in Ethiopia predicting that his rule of Egypt would last fifty years. Anysis returned and took up the rule of Egypt again. After him came Sethos, a high priest of Hephæstus (that is, Ptah). We are told that he was a bad king who neglected the warrior class of Egypt. When Egypt was again invaded, this time from the East by Sennacherib the Assyrian, he had no army with which to defend his kingdom. While incubating in a temple Sethos had a dream that he should march out anyway and that the divine would send him helpers. So, having marched out with a hastily assembled army of shopkeepers and artisans, Sethos encamped at Pelusium on the border of the Eastern Delta. Then, just before offering battle, a swarm of field-mice attacked Sennacherib's army, ate their bowstrings and shield handles, and forced

¹⁷ Assmann (n. 1), 409.

¹⁸ Assmann (n. 1), 411.

¹⁹ Cf. Manning (n. 16), 165–6.

²⁰ T. Säve-Söderbergh, 'Zu den äthiopischen Episoden bei Herodot', *Eranos* 44 (1946), 68–80, esp. 72; cf. P. Froschauer, *Herodots ägyptischer Logos* (Diss. Innsbruck, 1991), 75–77.

²¹ Cf. A. B. Lloyd, *Herodotus Book II Commentary* 99–182 (Leiden, 1988), 90–1 ad loc; also Frankfurter (n. 16), 243 and n. 14.

the invaders to withdraw. To be sure there are deviations from the standard here: Anyasis, the wise and blind king, is both pharaoh and seer; Sabacos the Ethiopian is not really an evil ruler, though he is encouraged to be, and so forth. But these differences should not obscure the larger point that unmistakable elements from the prophetic *Königsnovelle* have found their way into Herodotus' account: a focus on the decisions of pharaoh (good and bad); the foreign domination of Egypt for a specific period of time, delimited by the flight and return of the native ruler; prophetic dreams; a miraculous victory.

Armed with a sense as to what the *Königsnovelle* looks like when merged with the language of *Chaosbeschreibung*, and furthermore aware that at least one fairly certain case of such a compound prophetic 'king's story' seems to be present in Herodotus' Book 2, I turn to the invasion of Egypt by Cambyses and his subsequent actions. The first point to notice is that, as Herodotus reports, Cambyses' invasion of Egypt comes from the East and culminates in a battle on the eastern edge of the Nile delta at Pelusium, followed by a brief siege of Memphis. None of these facts is especially remarkable by itself—after all, these are geopolitical realities: if an invader from Persia is to attack Egypt, how else would he manage it? But this is not all we are told. Although Herodotus is sparing with his details until Cambyses is established in Memphis,²² he pauses to tell us where Egyptian territory begins, and where, we learn a little later on, the decisive battle took place: 'from the city of Ienysus until lake Serbonis, beside which Mt Casius extends to the sea, [the territory] belongs to the Syrians; from lake Serbonis onward, it belongs to the Egyptians; now in this lake there is a story that Typhon has been concealed' (ἐν τῇ [λίμνῃ] δὴ λόγος τὸν Τυφῶ κεκρύφθαι, [3.5.3]). This detail is highly significant: Typhon is the Greek equivalent of the Egyptian god Seth, the enemy of Osiris and Horus, and the deity associated with disorder and chaos. As we noted above, the story of the conflict between Seth and Osiris/Horus forms the mythical backdrop to *Chaosbeschreibung*: external enemies of Egypt are often labelled 'Typhonic', or minions of Seth, who invade from the East. Later Greek writers knew that the eastern part of the Delta was called 'the blasts of Typhon' (Plut. *Vit. Ant.* 3.6). On the other hand, the Hyksos inspired tales of Manetho, dating to the early Ptolemaic period, focus on the 'Typhonic city' of the invaders, Avaris, located in precisely the same area (*FGrHist* 609, F 10 = Joseph. *Ap.* 1.78, 86, 237). This last parallel is most instructive—Manetho describes Avaris as ἡ πόλις κατὰ τὴν θεολογίαν ἄνωθεν Τυφώνιος. He also lays stress on the traditional, even priestly source for the characterization of this place as 'Typhonic' (note the phrase κατὰ τὴν θεολογίαν). The information Herodotus provides about lake Serbonis is precisely what one would expect for a *logos* that makes Cambyses into the timeless enemy of Egypt. And recall: it is Herodotus who volunteers the information, really without any narrative motivation, that the lake is the place where, according to an Egyptian *logos*, Typhon is concealed—as in Manetho, a reference to priestly lore.

I pass over the battle of Pelusium itself and the humiliation and death of the Pharaoh Psammenitus and focus on Cambyses' first major crime in Egypt. Herodotus tells us that after Cambyses captured Memphis and crushed Egyptian resistance, he moved on to the dynastic capital, Sais. He went there for a reason: 'Cambyses went from Memphis to Sais, wanting to do those things that in fact he did' (3.16.1). This introduction is deliberately oblique and a narrative tease—in the

²² Cf. S. West, 'Croesus' second reprieve and other tales of the Persian court', *CQ* 53 (2003), 421, n. 23.

terms Mabel Lang has developed for reading Herodotus, it is a 'near-distance topic sentence'.²³ What Cambyses did, of course, was mutilate, with some difficulty, the mummified corpse of Psammenitus' father, Amasis. Having first tried to break the body into pieces by various means including whips, Cambyses ordered that the mummy be burnt, an act Herodotus tells us that was an offence against both Egyptian and Persian religious scruple (3.16.3). But at the conclusion of the report, Herodotus adds a crucial piece of information that he himself discounts: the Egyptians claim that the body that was mutilated was not in fact that of Amasis, but another man 'of about the same age' (3.16.5). Amasis, it turns out, had learned from an oracle that his mummy was to be the object of such an assault, and ordered that a similarly aged man be buried just inside the tomb, whereas he ordered his son to place his body in the furthest possible recess of the chamber. Herodotus does not believe that Amasis gave these orders, rather 'it is just a tale the Egyptians tell to save face' (*ἄλλως δ' αὐτὰ Αἰγύπτιοι σεμνοῦν* 3.16.7). It is striking that, as with the other Egyptian *logos* Herodotus has so far reported in connection with Cambyses—namely the Egyptian claim that he was a native son—he finds the same motivation for the story of Amasis' mummy: Egyptian national pride. But this time, of course, the invader has not been appropriated; rather, his crime has been made to be not as bad as he intended.

There is another point worth making here too. This is not by any means the only significant tomb-violation by a Persian that Herodotus reports: Darius opens up the crypt of Nitocris, a former queen of Babylon (1.187), and there is also the case of Artañctes and the tomb of Protesilaus (9.116). But whereas these other cases involve the plundering of treasure, Cambyses' action involves an assault upon the body of a former king, and not just any king, but the father of his opponent in war and a leading figure of the Saite period. Indeed, recall that Cambyses was alleged to have been the son of Cyrus and the grandson, through Nitetis, of Apries. Apries, Herodotus tells us, was overthrown by Amasis, the man whose corpse Cambyses attacked. Could we have a coherent narrative emerging here that has Cambyses mutilating the body of the man who overthrew his Egyptian grandfather?²⁴ We will return to this point later, but it is worth stressing here that, however we want to interpret the passage, the story of the mutilation of Amasis' mummy is not just about offending religious beliefs, it is also about kingship. It is important to remember that the prophetic *Königsnovelle* has as a prominent component an admonitory dream, such as Amasis receives regarding the future violation of his tomb. Furthermore, the instructions he leaves behind for Psammenitus can perhaps be linked to the royal instructions left by pharaohs to their sons, the most famous of these being the Instruction or Testament of Amenemhet I to his son Senwosret I (Pritchard, *ANET*³ 418–9).

After the episode of the destruction of Amasis' corpse, Herodotus reports two unsuccessful military campaigns of Cambyses, or rather, three, one of which is abandoned before it gets under way: the Carthaginian campaign is never launched (3.17–19), while Cambyses himself leads an expedition against Ethiopia (3.20–25), and another force is sent to the oracle of Ammon at the Siwah oasis (3.26). Of great interest regarding the Long-lived Ethiopians is the way Herodotus has constructed them,

²³ M. L. Lang, *Herodotean Narrative and Discourse* (Cambridge, MA, 1984), 9–10.

²⁴ Cf. K. M. T. Atkinson, 'The legitimacy of Cambyses and Darius as kings of Egypt', *JAOS* 76 (1956), 171; M. Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism* 2 (Leiden, 1982), 72, and Lloyd (n. 13), 62.

and especially their king, as noble barbarians who, in utopian fashion, criticize not only the customs of the Persians, but, implicitly, also the world of the Greeks.²⁵ But I think it is equally important not to lose sight of the simple facts of the campaign. First it involves, as intermediaries for Cambyses, a group of people called the Fish Eaters; secondly, Cambyses' own involvement in the campaign and his hasty decision to attack the Ethiopians is attributed to his madness, first mentioned at this point in the narrative; and finally the expedition is of course a spectacular failure, resulting in the starvation of Cambyses' army, which is forced to turn to cannibalism to survive (3.25.6), and the humiliating retreat back to Memphis.

The precise identification of the region involved in Cambyses' southern campaign is problematic.²⁶ Some have speculated that in launching his campaign Cambyses was in fact pursuing a long-standing Egyptian policy, though others doubt that the expedition ever took place.²⁷ On the other hand, it is worth noting here that 'Ethiopia' is a place of refuge for the rightful king in the Hyksos narrative of Manetho (*FGrHist* 609 F 10 = Joseph. *Ap.* 1.246), and becomes the staging-area for his eventual return and the successful expulsion of the Asiatic invaders. Although it may be a complete coincidence, I think it is interesting that in one of the important models of Classical *Chaosbeschreibung* in Egypt, namely the Prophecy of Neferti, 'fish-eaters' are also prominent, killed by the strange new bird inhabiting the Delta, that is, the invading Asiatic (*ANET*³ 445). This same prophetic text, by the way, makes prominent reference to 'the South' (*T3-sty*—Upper Egypt) as being the place from where the Pharaoh Ameni will come to drive out the Chaos brought on by the invasion from the East. These texts suggest that Cambyses was viewed as an outsider who attempted to attack the last stronghold of Egypt. Yet viewed from another perspective, his interest in the security of the southern borders of Egypt coheres with the view of him as the lawful pharaoh. As for the failure of his expedition, one can point to the Oracle of the Potter, a text of Ptolemaic date in origin, but clearly within the same tradition that ultimately goes back to the prophecy of Neferti. While it does not have cannibalism *per se*, it does emphasize that the 'Typhonians', also called *zonophoroi*, destroy themselves: the prophecy tells us that 'the Girdlewearers will kill each other as they are also Typhonians'.²⁸ It is true that the parallels between Herodotus' narrative and the *Chaosbeschreibung* tradition are not precise, but I would hasten to add that there is no one 'master version' of such texts, and secondly, that a considerable amount of deformation has no doubt taken place between what Herodotus heard and what has ended up in his account.

It is in the aftermath of the failed campaigns to Ethiopia and Siwah that Herodotus records the most important episode during Cambyses' rule in Egypt: his murder in Memphis of the sacred calf, Apis. It is important to review briefly the events as Herodotus presents them. After Cambyses' return from his expedition to Ethiopia, 'Apis appeared to the Egyptians'—ἐφάνη Αἰγυπτίοισι ὁ Ἄπις (3.27.1). The Egyptians put on their best clothes, declared a holiday, and celebrated the epiphany.

²⁵ Cf. R. V. Munson, *Telling Wonders. Ethnographic and Political Discourse in the Work of Herodotus* (Ann Arbor, 2001), 79 and n. 102, with bibliography. Also F. Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus* (Berkeley, 1988; trans. from French edn of 1980), 44, 76, and 166.

²⁶ C. Tuplin, 'Darius' Suez canal and Persian imperialism', *AchHist* 6 (1991), 263.

²⁷ See esp. R. Morkot, 'Nubia and Achaemenid Persia', *AchHist* 6 (1991), 326–7 with bibliography.

²⁸ L. Koenen, 'Die Prophezierungen des "Töpfers"', *ZPE* 2 (1968), 204–5: P₂ col. I.28–9 ἐαυτοὺς δ' οἱ ζωνοφόροι ἀνελοῦσιν ἄντες, *Τυφωνικοί*; P₃ Col. III 49–50 καὶ ἐαυτοὺς οἱ ζωνοφόροι | ἀνελοῦσιν ἄντες καὶ αὐτοὶ Τυφωνιοί.

Cambyes saw the festivities and was convinced that the Egyptians were celebrating his recent failures. He ordered the ‘governors in charge of Memphis’ (οἱ ἐπίτροποι τῆς Μέμφιος) to appear before him (3.27.2). When they claimed that the festivities had nothing to do with Cambyes’ setbacks, but rather were the genuine celebrations of the visit of a god who revealed himself only rarely to the Egyptians, Cambyes angrily denounced the *epitropoi* as liars and had them killed. He then summoned men who are explicitly identified as priests (ἀποκτείνας δὲ τούτους [the *epitropoi*] δεύτερα τοὺς ἱρέας ἐκάλεε ἐς ὄψιν, 3.28.1); when they offered the same explanation as the *epitropoi*, Cambyes declared his intention to test the divinity of the god himself, and ordered the priests to bring Apis to him. When the calf was brought before him, Cambyes aimed his dagger at Apis’ stomach but missed and struck his thigh (3.29.1). He denounced the calf as a fraud, had the priests whipped, and then broke up the festival. The calf was rescued, though how we are not told, but later died in his temple after wasting away from the wound, and was buried in secret by the priests.

This horrible act was committed by Cambyes in a state of madness, as Herodotus is careful to point out: he struck the animal, ‘inasmuch as he was rather deranged’—οἷα ἐὼν ὑπομαργότερος (3.29.1).²⁹ We have seen Cambyes’ madness as an explanation before, and the crime against Apis serves to launch the theme in earnest: Herodotus tells us that the Egyptians claim that because of this *adikema* Cambyes went mad (ἐμάνη) and then murdered his brother Smerdis and later murdered one of his own full sisters, whom he had married, contrary to Persian custom, having first married another sister whom he especially loved (3.31.6). This last point is interesting: although it is often asserted that brother–sister marriage was common in Egypt and especially in pharaonic families, evidence for it in the royal houses of Egypt is in fact thin, and it was not at all acceptable in other strata of society (other forms of close consanguineous marriage are certainly found),³⁰ so Cambyes cannot be thought here to have ‘gone native’; indeed, Herodotus implies that he married his sisters in Persia, before leaving for Egypt. Even more significantly, Herodotus’ near (if not exact) contemporary Xanthus is aware of the brother–sister marriage among the Persians (*FGrHist* 765, F 31), contrary to Herodotus’ claim that it was not practiced before Cambyes’ time; indeed, according to Herodotus, Persian royal judges (*basileioi dikastai*) were summoned who were essentially forced to find a loophole for Cambyes that permitted him to marry his sisters (3.31). However we resolve the problem of Cambyes’ marriages,³¹ at the very least there was clearly ambiguity in Persian marriage practice, and not the clear-cut taboo that Herodotus claims. As with the case of the burning of Amasis’ corpse, Herodotus is at pains to demonstrate that Cambyes was violating his own societal laws, as well as those of Egypt.

It is worth pausing to consider some of the details that Herodotus reports in connection with Apis. Since the Apis bull is so important, it is easy to lose sight of the essential fact that in mortally wounding him, Cambyes killed a sacred animal.

²⁹ Herodotus reports at 3.33 that it is ‘not implausible’ that Cambyes’ madness was due to his epilepsy: see R. Parker, *Miasma* (Oxford, 1983), 243. Also Munson (n. 25), 169.

³⁰ Cf. A. B. Lloyd, ‘The late period, 664–323 B.C.’, in *Ancient Egypt. A Social History* (Cambridge, 1983), 311.

³¹ Note that M. Brosius, *Women in Ancient Persia 559–331 B.C.* (Oxford, 1996), 45–7 doubts that Cambyes married his sisters, though Boyce (n. 24), 75–7 accepts the unions as historical. It seems to be the case that father–daughter marriage was even practised at times (Artaxerxes II: Plut. *Arta.* 23.5; cf. Heracleides *FGrHist* 689, F 7).

A standard feature of Egyptian *Chaosbeschreibung* is precisely the destruction of sacred animals and the conversion of the sanctuaries into kitchens for roasting them, or, alternatively, as stables: one sees the butchery of animals and their being roasted in Manetho's Leper fragment (*FGrHist* 609, F 10 = Joseph. *Ap.* 1.249), and the conversion of the temples to horse-stables in an anti-Jewish prophecy within the Potter Oracle tradition (*PSI* 982).³² An objection to reading Cambyses' murder of Apis as part of this same tradition might be that we have no suggestion that Apis was butchered and eaten: indeed, we are told he dies in a temple and is buried in secret. Although highly speculative, I would like to note the term used of Cambyses' state of mind when he assaulted the calf: he is ὑπομαργότερος. This is a rare word that occurs only two other times in Herodotus: once to describe the Samian aristocrat Charilaus, and once (significantly; see appendix) of King Cleomenes of Sparta.³³ The root μαργ-, as Chantraine reminds us, is connected not only to madness, but to gluttony as well;³⁴ the prefix ὑπο- in the sense 'excessive' is strictly speaking otiose, for the very notion of gluttony bound up in the μαργ-matrix of words implies excess, but obviously Herodotus was trying to make a point. While I would not want to press the issue, it may be that Herodotus' narrative betrays some awareness of the fate of the butchered sacred animals of Egypt typical in *Chaosbeschreibung* through the use of this otherwise rare term.

Of much greater certainty, and no less importance, is the fate of the priests in the Apis episode. Because of the focus on the ill-fated calf, it is seldom pointed out that the humiliation of Egyptian cult that takes place in this scene involves not just the animal, but the priests and their shrines. Recall that the priests are whipped; indeed, if *epitropoi* can be understood as referring to officials with connections to the important temples of Memphis, it could be argued that some officers of cult are even killed.³⁵ And a bit later, just before Herodotus' famous excursus on the importance of *nomos*, we learn that during his stay in Memphis Cambyses also broke open ancient tombs and examined the bodies within, entered the temple of Ptah and mocked his image (τῷ ἀγάλματι κατεγέλασε 3.37.2), and violated the most sacred area of the temple of Sakhmet and Nefertem (the two gods who with Ptah form the so-called Memphite triad) and destroyed their statues. We have already seen that the desecration of temple space is typical of Egyptian *Chaosbeschreibung*, where sanctuaries are made into kitchens or stables; often within the tradition, the king will remove the images of the gods ahead of the invader in order to protect them.³⁶ But it should be pointed out that the humiliation of the priests is found there too: in the same section of the Leper fragment of Manetho mentioned above, the priests are made to butcher the sacred animals of Egypt (*FGrHist* 609 F 10 = Josephus

³² On the connection of this text to the Potter tradition, see Koenen (n. 16, 2002), 148–51; also Dillery (n. 16), 103.

³³ In addition to 3.29.1, also 3.145.1 and 6.75.1. See J. E. Powell, *A Lexicon to Herodotus* (Cambridge, 1938), s.v. Cf. Munson (n. 25), 169, n. 95.

³⁴ P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire Étymologique de la Langue Grecque* 3–4 (Paris, 1984), s.v. μάργος.

³⁵ To judge by later Ptolemaic practice there was a considerable overlap between temple and other officials: see D. J. Thompson, *Memphis Under the Ptolemies* (Princeton, 1988), 110–12. Hence, Cambyses' execution of the *epitropoi* could perhaps be interpreted as action directed against priestly figures.

³⁶ See Koenen (n. 16, 2002), 158–59, n. 60, citing J. J. Winnicki, 'Carrying off and bringing back the statues of the gods', *JJP* 24 (1994), 149–90, and H. J. Thissen, "'Apocalypse Now!'" *Anmerkungen zum Lamm des Bokchoris*, in W. Clarysse, A. Schoors, and H. Willems (edd.), *Egyptian Religion in the Last Thousand Years* (Leuven, 1998), 1048.

Ap. 1.249). We should not forget that elsewhere in Herodotus, in a section also reflecting the same tradition, the Ethiopian King Sabacos receives a dream from the divine urging him to slaughter the priests of Egypt (2.139).

I claim to have shown that there is a strong possibility that Herodotus' account of Cambyses' activities in Egypt is ultimately dependent not just on vaguely conceived nationalist propaganda, as Herodotus' Egyptian source is often styled, but specifically on a narrative composed from within the well-established *Chaosbeschreibung* tradition, and along the lines of the prophetic *Königsnovelle*, with its emphasis on a series of decisions by the ruler of Egypt. It is, therefore, certainly worth raising the question at this point, whether there is any evidence for a Cambyses-narrative of the sort that is being argued for here, and the answer is, most definitely, 'yes': there is the *Cambyses Romance* in Coptic, as well as a related account by John, Bishop of Nikiu.³⁷ Before dismissing these late texts as having no bearing on Herodotus' putative source, it is good to recall what Alan Bowman has said in connection with the *Cambyses Romance*: 'the thread of undying hostility in Egypt to the Persians is amply expressed by the fact that there exists a Coptic account of the Persian conquest by Cambyses'.³⁸ Of course a 'thread' implies a line of continuity going back several years. A major problem, however, in considering the *Romance* as external proof for a narrative tradition that may also have served as the ultimate source for Herodotus is that there is the possibility that these later stories, both the *Romance* and John, may in fact go back to Herodotus himself.³⁹

Let us take a close look at the *Romance*. After a damaged portion, we pick up the story with negotiations between Cambyses and the Egyptians; this is quickly followed by reference to the fact that the Egyptians have been 'disobedient' (2.17–18 Ludin Jansen). Next comes a scene in which we see the Egyptians contemplate killing Cambyses' messengers; they are persuaded not to do this by a man named Bothor, and the messengers are sent back to Cambyses, though with a defiant response: 'by the might of pharaoh and by the honor of Egypt and our Lord Apis, the honor of the crown and the strength of the warriors ... if Apis is in Memphis and Ammon is in Daphnai, ... if these things are so ... then know that indeed they will strike you ...' (5.18–28). Further, the Egyptians go on to swear that horrible things will be done to Cambyses himself and his children: 'your children we shall slay in your presence' (6.3). Evidently, a courtier to Cambyses then comes up with a plan of deception, required because the Egyptian army is so formidable (note esp. 9.7–8: 'now thou wilt not be able to prevail against Egypt except/by pretext and cunning').⁴⁰ Cambyses will invite all the people of Egypt to come to a festival in honour of Apis. Indeed, 'it is Apis who summons you so that you may be happy at

³⁷ H. Ludin Jansen, *The Coptic Story of Cambyses' Invasion of Egypt*, Avhandlingar utgitt av Det Norske Videnskaps-Akademie i Oslo. II Hist.-Filos. Klasse 1950 no. 2 (Oslo, 1950); R. H. Charles, *The Chronicle of John, Bishop of Nikiu* (London, 1916). For the relationship between the two, see esp. A. B. Lloyd, 'Cambyses in late tradition', in C. Eyre, A. Leahy, and L. Montagno Leahy (edd.), *The Unbroken Reed. Studies in the Culture and Heritage of Ancient Egypt in Honour of A. F. Shore* (London, 1994), 195–204; cf. E. Cruz-Urbe, 'Notes on the Coptic Cambyses Romance', *Enchoria* 14 (1986), 51–6, and S. Döpp, 'Kambyses' Feldzug gegen Ägypten: Der sogenannte Kambyses-Roman und sein Verhältnis zu griechischer Literatur', *Göttinger Forum für Altertumswissenschaft* 6 (2003), 1–17 (available at <http://www.gfa.d-r.de/6-03/doepp.pdf>).

³⁸ A. K. Bowman, *Egypt after the Pharaohs* (Berkeley, 1989), 52; cf. Cruz-Urbe (n. 37), 56, and L. S. B. MacCoull, 'The Coptic Cambyses narrative reconsidered', *GRBS* 23 (1982), 188.

³⁹ Lloyd (n. 37), esp. his stemma on 202. See also Manning (n. 16), 40, n. 83.

⁴⁰ Lloyd (n. 37), 197.

this feast, because he has revealed to us things that will take place in this year . . . I desire that you shall come to Apis so that he can tell you these things in a revelation' (10.7–13). The Egyptians do not fall for the trick, and instead assemble, armed and prepared for war. At this point the text breaks off.

There are major divergences here from the narrative of Herodotus, but at least some of them may be due to a difference in emphasis. A case in point: any text that Herodotus would have known or which would have formed the basis of what was told to him would have evolved in a world in which the Persian domination of Egypt was still a political reality. On the other hand, the *Cambyzes Romance* speaks easily of the 'kings of the Gauls and the Hittites' (6.15–16); it reflects a world that has known several conquerors of Egypt, but perforce also their downfalls. Hence the *Tendenz* in the *Romance* is more 'historicized', perhaps looking forward to the end of Persian rule. Such a perspective is naturally impossible for Herodotus and his source. But other differences are more telling. Most important, for our purposes, is the fact that nowhere is there evidence in the *Romance* that Cambyzes was turned into an Egyptian or half-Egyptian; indeed, the opposite is the case, for he is assimilated to Nebuchadnezzar, the prototypical Easterner and enemy of Egypt.⁴¹ It is important not to forget that the *Romance*, because of its damaged state, shows us only the events down to the actual outbreak of hostilities, and thus the arbitrary nature of preservation skews somewhat our understanding of even what we can read. Nonetheless, while it is true that, in making Cambyzes the paradigmatic invader of Egypt, the *Romance* would seem only to develop more fully the picture of him we get already in Herodotus, the fact that Herodotus does preserve elements that make Cambyzes Egyptian points to contact with a world-view that is radically different from what we see in the *Romance*.

But, with that said, there are some very general similarities between Herodotus and the *Romance*. Cambyzes' early negotiations are like his marriage plans at the start of Book 3. Much of the narrative of the *Romance* is taken up with the question of Cambyzes' messengers (3.6, 4.13), and in fact, Herodotus too reports the mission of a herald (*kerux*), sent after Pelusium to negotiate with the Egyptians besieged in Memphis; he, however, is killed and mutilated (3.13).⁴² The threat to slaughter the children of Cambyzes in his presence may find a parallel in the scene before the battle of Pelusium when the Egyptians slit the throats of the turncoat Phanes' sons (3.11), but this is probably pushing the comparison too far. More certain is the role of Apis and the importance of his festival in both the *Romance* and Herodotus, though admittedly the 'details are quite different'.⁴³ It would be interesting to know what, if anything, was made of the alleged vision of Apis that Cambyzes wished to share with the people of Egypt in the *Romance* (10.13). It is certainly just such details that are exploited in other texts for the purpose of including a full-scale prophecy predicting hardship for Egypt, followed by restoration. It was obviously not going to be Cambyzes' intention to give such a prophecy at his false festival of Apis, but perhaps the text returned to the idea in another way. He would not be the only monarch in such narratives to trigger inadvertently an authentic divine communication—the Pharaoh Amenophis in Manetho does precisely this (*FGrHist* 609, F 10 = Joseph. *Ap.* 1.232).

At this point I should pause and take stock of the implications of what I have so far presented, and venture something of a provisional interpretation. I would argue that

⁴¹ Lloyd (n. 37), 198.

⁴² Cf. Lloyd (n. 37), 196.

⁴³ Lloyd (n. 37), 196.

many of the features of Herodotus' narrative of Cambyses' invasion and rule in Egypt conform in broad terms to traditional native forms of literature that focus on kingship and the problem of foreign domination. His source for this information could easily have been Egyptian priests in whose Houses of Life (temple libraries) would have been stored the earlier, classical antecedents of this type of text such as the Prophecy of Neferti, and who, furthermore, were no doubt also responsible for the later incarnations of the form that were written in Demotic. We should not, however, discount the role of Greeks resident in Egypt, especially the so-called Hellenomemphite community. The very first document in Wilcken's magisterial collection, *Urkunden der Ptolemäerzeit* (1927) is the famous curse text of one Artemisia, dating to the fourth century. Her father's name was Amasis, and so is probably a descendant of the troops settled by that monarch in Memphis.⁴⁴ Dorothy Thompson has shown us that the Apis cult was especially important to this community, pointing not only to the Artemisia text, but also an early fifth-century statuette of Apis with an inscription in Doric script (Jeffery, *LSAG* 355 no. 52).⁴⁵ These people would certainly have formed views about the Persian conquest and rule of Egypt, and would not have been ignorant of the oral traditions that circulated around the shrine of Apis at Memphis. They may even have known elements of the written tradition about Cambyses, though this is admittedly more speculative. That there were such stories about Cambyses seems confirmed by the existence of the *Cambyses Romance*. To be sure, there are overlaps with Herodotus, but these are few, and the differences from his account suggest that it derives from an old tradition that may well also be in the background of Herodotus' source, but which is not derived from Herodotus.

If Herodotus was following such a tradition, whether directly from members of the Egyptian priesthood, or perhaps from knowledgeable Greeks resident in Egypt, we are left with a sizeable problem. How do we explain the Egyptian *logos* Herodotus also reports that makes Cambyses out to be a native son? The straightforward answer, and one I shall turn to in a moment, is that Herodotus had two distinct Egyptian traditions to work with, one that treated Cambyses negatively, and one that was positive. But I think it is worth first considering the possibility that he relied on only one tradition, and one that was in fact uniformly negative, but that was perhaps misunderstood by Herodotus. Recall that Herodotus alleges that the Egyptians tell the story of Cambyses actually being an Egyptian in order to 'save face'; and further, that the same explanation is given for their story about how Amasis' corpse was not in fact the one that was attacked and destroyed. In reviewing that story, I also pointed out that even the account that Herodotus accepts is important in this context because a certain consistency could be argued for in Cambyses' assault upon Amasis if he was thought of as the grandson of Amasis' predecessor, Apries. The negative characterization of even a native ruler is not at all uncommon in the *Königsnovellen*, as we see for instance in the Amenophis stories of Manetho, and which one can sense also in the figure of Nectanebo in the *Alexander Romance*. The issue of the characterization of pharaoh in these stories has to do ultimately with the ideology of kingship in Egypt. It is very important to remember that if a man becomes pharaoh, then that simple fact, namely to have successfully obtained the throne, suggests that he had to have had divine approval; correspondingly, when it is clear that the gods are actually favoring

⁴⁴ U. Wilcken, *Urkunden der Ptolemäerzeit* 1 (Berlin, 1927), no. 1. Wilcken raises the possibility (99) that the family may have been Caromemphites originally from Halicarnassus, due to the name Artemisia.

⁴⁵ Thompson (n. 35), 95–7. Also the excellent study of P. Borgeaud and Y. Volokhine, 'La formation de la légende de Sarapis: une approche transculturelle', *ARG* 1 (2000), 37–76.

the invaders of Egypt, as Nectanebo can see in his mantic session in the *Alexander Romance*, then he is no longer the legitimate pharaoh and flees Egypt (Ps. Callisth. 1.3). Even if a man begins his rule as a usurper of some sort, he must be seen, if only for a brief period, as the legitimate ruler. However, once on the throne, legitimacy can just as quickly be lost if the monarch does not behave properly, particularly towards the priests and cult of Egypt. Given this ideological framework, it is perhaps not so difficult to imagine a negative tradition regarding Cambyses that yet still made him out to be a native son, necessitated by the fact that he did, after all, gain control of Egypt. It was his subsequent actions that revealed him to be, in the event, an illegitimate ruler.

While we have to reconstruct the negative tradition in Egypt about Cambyses from Herodotus and the *Cambyses Romance*, there is no difficulty at all in finding a positive view of him. It is widely acknowledged that the Apis bull episode as recorded by Herodotus involves an enormous problem. The Egyptians kept very careful records of the births, enthronements, and especially the entombments of the Apis bull; indeed, their 'reigns', like that of the pharaohs with whom they were so closely associated, were even used for dating purposes. Working with these documents, later housed in the Serapeum in Memphis, Georges Posener in 1936 noted that for the period of Cambyses' rule we have one such text that announces that an Apis bull was entombed on Shemu 10 during the sixth year of Cambyses, that is in 524.⁴⁶ The inscription, in fact, refers to Cambyses taking responsibility for the lavish burial of the Apis, and speaks of his pious regard 'for his father Apis Osiris'—in death Apis becomes Osiris, father of Horus, that is, the reigning pharaoh. The accompanying frieze even shows him kneeling before the incarnate god. Needless to say, this evidence is profoundly different from what Herodotus reports. The next Apis bull is recorded as having been entombed in the fourth year of Darius (518), and in this case, we are told that it was born during the fifth year of Cambyses' rule.⁴⁷ A few scholars, notably Klasens in 1948 and more recently Depuydt in 1995,⁴⁸ have argued that there could have been a third Apis who came in between the two bulls on record, and who in fact was killed by Cambyses, and whose reign and entombment were never recorded, as Herodotus suggests. Various arguments can and have been made about the dating of the careers of Apis calves, and in particular whether a calf not yet identified as an Apis could be alive while another animal was still reigning, but ultimately the claims of Klasens and Depuydt rest on an argument from silence. Moreover, their line of approach tends to turn our attention away from the indisputable fact that Egyptian documents show us a Cambyses who is a dutiful adherent of the Apis cult. Such a figure might well be styled a native son of Egypt.⁴⁹

Posener very rightly drew notice to yet another Egyptian document that bolsters the view of Cambyses that we get from the Apis stele, and this is the testament of Udjahorresne.⁵⁰ This man came from the dynastic centre of Sais and was a doctor; he was also a naval officer and a priest of Neith. In his autobiography, inscribed on

⁴⁶ G. Posener, *La première domination perse en Égypte* (Paris, 1936), 35–6 and 173, n. 1.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 36–40.

⁴⁸ A. Klasens, 'Égypte onder Perzen en Grieken-Romeinen. Cambyses en Egypte', *Jaarbericht van het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Genootschap. Ex Oriente Lux* 10 (1944–48), 339–49, L. Depuydt, 'Murder in Memphis: the story of Cambyses's mortal wounding of the Apis Bull (ca. 523 B.C.E.)', *JNES* 54 (1995), 119–26. Cf. Atkinson (n. 24), 170–1.

⁴⁹ See most recently P. Briant, *Histoire de l'Empire perse de Cyrus à Alexandre = Achaemenid History* 10 (Leiden, 1996), 1.66–68 and 2.915–16, and Borgeaud and Volokhine (n. 45), 65–6, n. 129.

⁵⁰ Posener (n. 46), 1–29 and 164–75, esp. 171–2.

a naophorous statue now in the Vatican, he speaks of serving under Amasis, Psammenitus, Cambyses, and Darius. We learn from this text that Udjahorresne was not only a royal official, but under Cambyses at least, also a sort-of priestly representative for his temple and its community, building a relationship with the Persian monarch that functioned as a two-way street: Udjahorresne boasts that he 'let his majesty know how every beneficence had been done in the temple [of Neith] by every king' (Lichtheim *AEL*, §30).⁵¹ That is, he helped to confer legitimacy on Cambyses by making clear to him the duties he had to perform. But by the same token, Cambyses also gave standing and material help to Udjahorresne. Most extraordinarily, we learn from this same document that it was Udjahorresne who helped Cambyses with his pharaonic royal titlature, and in particular the selection of his crucial fourth name, Mesutire (§13).⁵² This is precisely the context in which to understand the odd reference in Herodotus to the Egyptians claiming Cambyses as one of their own. To be pharaoh, the ruler in question had to become Egyptian, with the full range of pharaonic royal names.⁵³ But, importantly, this adoption of Egyptian ways was not only essential to the king, it was also essential to the clergy of Egypt: as Winter demonstrated some time ago now, the king was the only real priest in Egypt, and he transferred or lent his priestly authority to those underneath him. Without a legitimate, Egyptian pharaoh on the throne of Upper and Lower Egypt, there could technically be no priests at all.⁵⁴ This relationship between the priestly class and pharaoh is even acknowledged in Greek sources: Diodorus reports at 1.95.4–5 that Cambyses' crimes in Egypt, especially those against its sanctuaries, so angered Darius I that they made him want to be a better ruler, and that he studied with the priests of Egypt and partook of 'their theology and the events written up in their sacred books' (μεταλαβείν αὐτὸν [Darius] τῆς τε θεολογίας καὶ τῶν ἐν ταῖς ἱεραῖς βίβλοις ἀναγεγραμμένων πράξεων), learning in particular about the old kings' greatness of heart and goodwill towards their subjects. This is obviously a ludicrous claim, but not one without historical interest. Inasmuch as a large portion of Diodorus Book 1 is derived from Hecataeus of Abdera,⁵⁵ and that Hecataeus in his turn clearly had access to Egyptian priestly records and priestly views, the notion that the Persian ruler should be schooled in the religious lore of Egypt by its priests may in fact reflect a widely held expectation, one that we see clearly in the testament of Udjahorresne. And it is not just any 'lore' either, but specifically the 'deeds' of old kings written up in sacred books, a description fitting of the *Königsnovellen*.

But even in the favourable Egyptian view of Cambyses there are details in Udjahorresne's testament that also remind us of the negative account that is so much more in evidence in Herodotus' narrative. The text is found on different parts

⁵¹ M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature 3: The Late Period* (Berkeley, 1980).

⁵² J. Dillery, 'Manetho and Udjahorresne: designing royal names for non-Egyptian pharaohs', *ZPE* 144 (2003), 201–2.

⁵³ Cf. Posener (n. 46), 161–3. For an explanation of the Egyptian system of pharaonic names, see esp. L. Koenen, 'The Ptolemaic king as a religious figure', in A. Bulloch, E. Gruen, A. Long, and A. Stewart (edd.), *Images and Ideologies. Self-definition in the Hellenistic World* (Berkeley, 1993), 48–50 and 57–61.

⁵⁴ E. Winter, 'Der Herrscherkult in den ägyptischen Ptolemäertempeln', in H. Maehler and V. Strocka (edd.), *Das ptolemäische Ägypten* (Mainz, 1978), 147–60.

⁵⁵ See esp. O. Murray, 'Hecataeus of Abdera and pharaonic kingship', *JEA* 56 (1970), 144–50, and S. M. Burstein, 'Hecataeus of Abdera's history of Egypt', in J. H. Johnson (ed.), *Life in Multi-cultural Society: Egypt from Cambyses to Constantine and Beyond* (Chicago, 1992), 45–49 = Burstein, *Graeco-Africana. Studies in the History of Greek Relations with Egypt and Nubia* (New Rochelle, 1995), 19–27.

of the statue (the body, the little *naos* he presents, the back plinth, and the base), but if we proceed chronologically by reference to kings, then towards the end of the Cambyses-section, we find the following testimonial:

I rescued [the inhabitants of Sais] from the very great turmoil when it happened in the whole land, the like of which had not happened in this land. I defended the weak against the strong. I rescued the timid man when misfortune came to him . . . (§§33–35)

And a little later,

I did [for all the households] every beneficence as a father does for his son, when the turmoil happened in this *nome*, in the midst of the very great turmoil that happened in the whole land. (§§39–41)

This ‘turmoil’ that Udjahorresne speaks of is, of course, the Persian conquest of Egypt, connected to the chaos of Seth/Typhon. Further, as Alan Lloyd has suggested, if we pay close attention to the titles given to Cambyses towards the beginning of the document, a crucial point emerges. When we first meet Cambyses he is styled ‘the Great Chief of all foreign lands’, that is, not pharaoh, but an outsider, a non-Egyptian king. But after his conquest and the establishment of his rule—by which I think we can assume the adoption of pharaonic ceremonial and practice as suggested to him by men like Udjahorresne—Cambyses is known as ‘Great Ruler of Egypt and Great Chief of all foreign lands’. This is to say that Cambyses has become the legitimate ruler of Egypt. But because he was first described as only ‘Great Chief of all foreign lands’, we are meant to understand a veiled threat of sorts: so long as Cambyses respected local cult and followed the advice of men like Udjahorresne, he would be pharaoh; but if he failed to do that, he would revert to being the typhonic ‘Great Chief of all foreign lands’, and the time of ‘turmoil’ would return. The discreet difference in title corresponds precisely with what we hear about in more detail in the rest of the document.⁵⁶ And the change in title also links up with the possibility that the making of Cambyses into an Egyptian could actually come from the negative, *Chaosbeschreibung* tradition. The major difference would be, of course, that with the Udjahorresne testament, the loss of his Egyptian status was always threatened, whereas in the forerunner to the *Cambyses Romance*, and presumably also in Herodotus’ source, the threat had been realized when Cambyses’ criminal nature was revealed. In fact scholars have drawn notice to a document preserved on the back of the Demotic Chronicle that suggests that Cambyses reorganized the tax structure of certain temple communities in Egypt;⁵⁷ perhaps while Udjahorresne’s Neith prospered, other gods did not, and this may well have been one reason for the negative tradition.

The crucial point in all of this is that, while scholars have known for some time that Herodotus must have followed a native account for much of his narrative on Cambyses, I do not think that sufficient attention has been paid to the fact that this testimony was not at all uniform and simple. Egyptian nationalism figured prominently in both the positive and negative traditions, and the difference between them points to the enormously complex standing of the native priestly élite in Egypt during the Persian period. Indeed, it was the priests of Egypt who produced these stories and so articulated a nationalist perspective. The two views of Cambyses

⁵⁶ A. B. Lloyd, ‘The inscription of Udjahorresnet. A collaborator’s testament’, *JEA* 68 (1982), 166–80, esp. 176–7.

⁵⁷ A. T. Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire* (Chicago, 1948), 91, Lloyd (n. 13), 64–5 with bibliography, and Tuplin (n. 26), 260–1. Generally, D. Devauchelle, ‘Le sentiment anti-perse chez les anciens Égyptiens’, *Transeuphratène* 9 (1995), 67–80.

may well be reflected in Herodotus' account, where positive and negative elements are found, though with much more of the latter. A significant parallel for the dual nature of Cambyses is the portrait we get of Alexander in the *Alexander Romance*. In the stories that concern his paternity by the Pharaoh Nectanebo as well as his foundation of Alexandria, Alexander is represented as a native son of Egypt and the legitimate pharaoh, indeed, the 'new Sesonchosis' or *kosmokrator* (Ps. Callisth. 1.34.2 Kroll).⁵⁸ However, at the end of the *Alexander Romance* (3.34),⁵⁹ there is clearly a suggestion that Alexandria is a 'typhonic' foundation that will be destroyed, and that the rightful seat of the gods is Memphis.⁶⁰ In other words, the same duality seems to be present.

If Cambyses did not do the things that Herodotus says he did, a view supported by the evidence collected by Posener and others, then we must ask the question: where then do these episodes come from? Inasmuch as the crimes committed by Cambyses seem to correspond to the evils envisioned in the *Chaosbeschreibung* tradition of Egypt, it seems reasonable to conclude that Herodotus' narrative of Cambyses' invasion and rule of Egypt derives ultimately from priestly texts that were in turn shaped within this tradition, in all likelihood in the form of prophetic *Königsnovellen*.

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APPENDIX: CAMBYSES, CLEOMENES AND HDT. 3.38

Although not directly related to the central argument of this paper, it is important briefly to consider the Cambyses-story in the larger context of Herodotus' *History* as a whole. Book 3 is central to two very important readings of Herodotus: one that focuses on his treatment of tyranny and how damaging it could be, and the other, an intellectual-historical reading that keeps track of how Herodotus makes explicit the central role that *nomos* or custom plays in shaping human societies. It is worth remembering that it is in Book 3 that we see notable Greek tyrants perpetrate family crimes as Cambyses did (Periander and Lycophron 3.50–53), as well as betray the self-destructive blindness that attends their good fortune (Polycrates 3.40–43 and 120–25). Most importantly, though, we see the shortcomings of tyranny defined for us by the Persian Otanes in the Constitutional Debate (3.80.2–6). And, of course, the much discussed excursus on the power of *nomos* is found even earlier in the same book (3.38). There are obvious organic links between the passages I have just mentioned and Cambyses in Egypt: the digression on *nomos* comes immediately following Herodotus' treatment of Cambyses' worst crimes, and the Polycrates *logos* is told in connection with Amasis, a story that in turn generates the Periander *logos*; and let us not forget that Cambyses is prominently mentioned by Otanes at the start of the Constitutional Debate (3.80.2).

⁵⁸ Cf. J. Ray, 'Egypt 525–404 B.C.', *CAH* 4 (1988²), 261. Also W. Aly, *Volksmärchen, Sage und Novelle bei Herodot und seinen Zeitgenossen* (Göttingen, 1921), 76–7.

⁵⁹ The end of the a-recension has to be largely reconstructed from the b and g recensions, as well as the Armenian translation of the *Alexander Romance*. See W. Kroll, *Historia Alexandri Magni Recensio Vetusta* (Berlin, 1926; repr. 1958), vii–viii, P. M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* 2 (Oxford, 1972), 32, n. 79 and R. Merkelbach, *Die Quellen des griechischen Alexanderromans*, *Zetemata* 9 (Munich, 1977), 32. For an excellent recent discussion of the vexed history of the transmission of the *Romance*, see P. M. Fraser, *Cities of Alexander the Great* (Oxford, 1996), 205–26.

⁶⁰ J. Dillery, 'Alexander's tomb at "Rhacotis": Ps. Callisth. 3.34.5 and the Oracle of the Potter', *ZPE* 148 (2004), 253–8.

Given that these connections are there, it is essential to note that these two quintessentially Greek projects—the inquiries into tyranny and *nomos*—are given important articulation in a context dominated by a narrative in all likelihood derived from native accounts of Cambyses' rule in Egypt. Of course this is not the only place in Herodotus where these topics come up—far from it. But it seems paradoxical that two of the central lessons of Herodotus' *History* find extensive and deliberate articulation in a narrative shaped by Egyptian sources. This paradox is felt most acutely when we turn to King Cleomenes of Sparta later in the text (esp. 6.75–84), Cambyses' 'historiographic twin'. Alan Griffiths has traced in close detail the remarkable similarities between Herodotus' account of this mad king of Sparta and the Cambyses-*logos*. Basing his conclusions on a table listing several points of similarity, he observes:

If one rejects the possibility that these two kings were genetic clones doomed from birth to mimic each other's behaviour, it is clear that there exists a case for claiming that either one king's story has been transferred to the other, or that both draw on a repertoire of classic 'wicked ruler' tales.⁶¹

It is tempting to assume that the similarities between Herodotus' treatments of Cleomenes and Cambyses are simply the result of a universal way of looking at the behaviour of evil rulers. Equally attractive, perhaps, is the reasonable claim that what we have in the parallelism of the careers of both mad kings is evidence of the regularizing features of the Herodotean imagination. He does not necessarily seek to mislead by fabricating two royal careers that share many points of contact; rather, the similarities are to some degree inadvertent.

But if we accept, for the moment, Griffiths's suggestion that 'one king's story has been transferred to the other', then I believe the evidence marshalled in this essay forces us to think, no doubt contrary to our expectations, that Herodotus followed a pattern derived ultimately from Egyptian sources when describing the Greek king. For if I am right in supposing that not only did Herodotus follow Egyptian tradition regarding Cambyses' invasion and rule of their land, he actually had contact with a positive native account as well, then the story of Cleomenes must be in some sense the derivative one. I cannot see how the crimes of Cambyses in Egypt do not originate at some point from native sources, for otherwise the coincidences between them and the *Chaosbeschreibung* tradition would be beyond belief. But if these features of narrative come ultimately from Egypt, then I do not see how a Greek tradition about Cleomenes could generate independently very nearly the same details. To be sure, the situation is probably far more complex than I have presented it here. It is not difficult to believe that both kings in fact did things in their careers which excited the belief that they were cruel and insane rulers. But it may well be that the Egyptian story of Cambyses exercised such an influence over Herodotus' thinking that he made the Cleomenes *logos* conform to it; and he may have been encouraged to do so precisely because there were elements in the story of Cleomenes' kingship that were in fact similar to Cambyses' rule of Egypt. I just note in passing that, as in the case of

⁶¹ A. Griffiths, 'Was Kleomenes mad?', in A. Powell (ed.), *Classical Sparta. Techniques Behind Her Success* (Norman, OK and London, 1988), 51–78; quote from 70; table on 71. See also J. Gould, 'Herodotus and the "resurrection"', in P. Derow and R. Parker (edd.), *Herodotus and His World. Essays from a Conference in Memory of George Forrest* (Oxford, 2003), 300–1, on the similar deaths of Cleomenes and Cambyses only, and specifically their late realization of a previously misunderstood oracle.

Cambyses, Herodotus' almost uniformly negative account of Cleomenes does contain positive material: he describes him in Book 3 as 'the most just of men' (3.148).

I do not mean to argue that Herodotus needed an Egyptian tradition about Cambyses to teach him about the concept of tyranny. The term *τυραννίς* had been around at least since the time of Archilochus (West 19). It does seem fair to say, however, that exposure to the Egyptian accounts of Cambyses' rule may have contributed to Herodotus' sense of how to characterize a lunatic ruler. If both kings had the reputation for being mad, perhaps the narrative arc of Cambyses' story seemed a suitable template for what Herodotus was to write about Cleomenes. In a recent article Ian Rutherford has similarly argued for a bicultural tradition for the novel and its antecedents in which Herodotus participated, and that well-known narratives from Egyptian fiction found their way into his text: he cites the famous Setne stories and the Petubastis cycle in particular.⁶²

In many ways the centre-piece to Book 3, and arguably one of the most important passages in the whole of the *History*, is Herodotus' observation on the power of *nomos* at 3.38: everyone thinks their own *nomoi* best, and hence only a madman, and specifically a mad tyrant, would wilfully mock the traditions of another, as in fact Cambyses did when he laughed at the statues of the Egyptian gods (reported at 3.37).⁶³ Citing Pindar, Herodotus famously exclaims, νόμον πάντων βασιλέα (= Pindar F 169a Snell–Maehler). Few passages of Herodotus have been treated more than this one,⁶⁴ so that certainty is impossible, but to my knowledge the background for Herodotus' discussion has always been thought to reside firmly in the Greek world, and specifically in the emerging *nomos-physis* controversy. Indeed, Antiphon the Sophist makes an observation almost identical to Herodotus: δικαιοσύνη [δ' οὐ]ν τὰ τῆς πόλεως νόμιμα, [ἐν ᾗ] ἂν πολυ[τεύ]ηται τις. μὴ [παρ]αβαίνειν (F 44(a) I.6–11 Pendrick).⁶⁵ It would be absurd to dispute the relevance of contemporary Greek thought about *nomos* to Herodotus. But with that said, it is worth noting that in the

⁶² I. Rutherford, 'The genealogy of the *boukoloi*: how Greek literature appropriated an Egyptian narrative motif', *JHS* 120 (2000), 106–21.

⁶³ 3.38.1: πανταχῇ ὅν μοι δῆλόν ἐστι ὅτι ἐμάνη μεγάλως ὁ Καμβύσης. οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἱροῖσιν τε καὶ νομαίοισιν ἐπεχείρησε καταγελᾶν. It may be significant that Herodotus here uses the term *νομαίοισιν*, not *νόμοισιν* or *νομίοισιν* (though the latter is in fact found in Hude's manuscript family d for our passage); cf. Asheri (n. 3), 215. In Herodotus *νόμαιον* seems always to be found in contexts where one culture borrows (or does not) from another culture's customs: 1.134.3, the Persians most accepting of other peoples' *nomiaia*; 2.49.3, the Egyptians have not taken religious practice or any other *nomiaion* from the Greeks; 2.91.1, the Egyptians avoid taking up Greek *nomiaia*, or for that matter, the *nomiaia* of any other people; 4.76.1, the Scythians avoid taking up foreign *nomiaia*; 4.77.2 Anacharsis killed because of foreign *nomiaia* and consorting with Greeks; 4.80.5, the Scythians adhere to their own *nomiaia* and punish those who try to introduce foreign *nomoi*; 4.104, the Agathyrsi hold their women in common, and in other *nomiaia* are like the Thracians; 4.113.3, the Amazons cannot live with Scythian women because their *nomiaia* are not the same. There are two cases when Herodotus uses *νόμαιον* where intercultural contact is not in question: 4.59.1, a general reference to the *nomiaia* of the Scythians; and 3.80.5, where Otanes claims that the tyrant disturbs *nomiaia patria*, violates women, and puts men to death without trial. This last passage is obviously nonetheless also relevant to 3.38. See Powell (n. 33), s.v.

⁶⁴ See, most recently, Thomas (n. 5), ch. 4, esp. 125–9; of note is S. Humphreys, 'Law, custom and culture in Herodotus', *Arethusa* 20 (1987), 211–20. Many scholars observe that Herodotus uses the Pindar quote in a sense other than the poet originally meant, indeed, in a way that seems more relevant to late fifth-century concerns.

⁶⁵ G. J. Pendrick, *Antiphon the Sophist: The Fragments* (Cambridge, 2002), 321, ad F 44(a) I.6–11 observes that the sentiment Antiphon expresses represents 'a thoroughly commonplace conception of justice', and cites Lysias 2.19, Xen. *Mem.* 4.4.12–13, and Pl. *Resp.* 359A. But none of these passages parallels 3.38 so precisely in the suggestion that proper conduct is the

sententiae of the Demotic Papyrus Insinger, dated to the first century A.D., but whose composition is traceable to the later Ptolemaic era, and whose contents are no doubt much older, we find the following instruction: 'Do not by yourself adopt a custom which differs from those of the land'.⁶⁶ Of course, Herodotus need not have known this piece of proverbial wisdom from the antecedents of Papyrus Insinger; indeed, it is safe to say there is no compelling reason to think he did. But what if the Egyptian priests he met with knew the text, or ones like it, and indeed had come to characterize Cambyses along lines informed by this sentiment? The priestly account of Cambyses' conquest of Egypt, conceived within the *Chaosbeschreibung* tradition, would have resonated powerfully with views Herodotus already possessed; but its influence did not stop there, for it very likely affected his understanding of the nature of Persian domination and tyrannical rule in general.⁶⁷

keeping of the customs of the particular place where one lives. For the parallel between Antiphon and Herodotus, see also Thomas (n. 5), 132–3.

⁶⁶ Lichtheim (n. 51), 188, §4.10. Note Lichtheim's introduction to the text (n. 51), 184–6, and also ead., *Late Egyptian Wisdom Literature in the International Context. A Study of Demotic Instructions* (Göttingen, 1983), 169, where she connects the sentiment to a *sententia* in Menander (no. 368) 'by custom everything is done and judged'; relatedly, Menander's *sententiae* were transmitted in Coptic: M. Weber and D. Hagedorn, 'Die griechisch-koptische Rezension der Menandersentenzen', *ZPE* 3 (1968), 15–50. With that said, the sentiment in PInsinger seems closer to Hdt. 3.38.

⁶⁷ Earlier versions of this paper were delivered at the University of Cincinnati and at L'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Science Sociales/Centre Louis Gernet in Paris. I would like to thank William Johnson and François Hartog for the invitations to speak, and to the audiences in both places for many helpful observations. The reader and editor for *CQ* also offered extremely useful suggestions and corrections. All flaws that remain are my own.

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